**Report of the**
**Accreditation Visiting Team**

# Creekside High School

## 179 East 5065 South
## Murray, Utah 84107

**March 24, 2005**

Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

# Creekside High School

## 179 East 5065 South
## Murray, Utah 84107

**March 24, 2005**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

**Patti Harrington, Ed.D.**
**State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF**
**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

**Christine Kearl, Associate Superintendent**

**Brett Moulding, Director**
**Curriculum and Instruction**

**Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist**
**Curriculum and Instruction**

**Salt Lake City, Utah**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 24, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Creekside High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Jennifer Kranz is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Creekside High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Creekside High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

# MURRAY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

## DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

# CREEKSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

# ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

## School Administration

Jennifer Kranz ..................................................................................................... Principal

## Counseling

Stephen Poulsen .................................................................................................. Counselor

## Support Staff

### Day Staff

Ilene Nelson ............................................................................................ School Secretary
Marsha Baird.......................................................................................................Nursery
Shane Fletcher................................................................ Security/In-School Suspension Aide
Kent Jensen ........................................................................................................Library Aide
Stephen Smith ..................................................................................................Day Janitor
Vicky Yocom.................................................................................... School Breakfast
JoAnn Wells.......................................................................................................... School Lunch
Ben Lough.......................................................................................................... Social Worker
Aubrey Ramos .....................................................................................School Mentor
Melanie Christensen..........................................................................................School Tutor
Linda Wheatley.............................................................Adult Education ESL Instructor
Ginger James.......................................................................... Adult Education ESL Aide

### Night Staff

Tom Rabb.............................................................................Adult Education Coordinator
Becca Olney ........................................................................................... Night Secretary
Zach Elliot..............................................................................................Night Janitor
Tracy Findlay..............................................................Adult Education ESL Instructor
Craig Butcher..................................................................Adult Education ESL Instructor
KellyJo Larsen ...............................................................Adult Education ESL Instructor
Rachel Dille ...........................................................................................Nursery
Rachael Cranney .............................................................................................Nursery

# Faculty

Nancy Brown ...................................................................................... English, History
Wendy Byars.................................................................................Business & Careers
Cathy Davis.......................................................................................School Success
Joseph Gibbs ...................................................................................... English, History
Janet Hancey ............................................................................................Art, English
Ronette Meyers ..............................................................Adult Education, GED, Reading
Stephen Poulsen...............................................................................Physical Education
Grayce Rees ........................................................................ Family & Consumer Science
Leah Spencer..................................................................................................Science
Melissa Spencer ........................................................................................Mathematics
Dennis Young ..............................................................................Driver's Education

**CREEKSIDE HIGH SCHOOL**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Creekside High School's Mission is to support our students in setting, planning, and accomplishing productive and ethical life goals and to provide systematic guidance through traditional and non-traditional educational opportunities in a small school setting.

**BELIEF STATEMENTS**

We believe that our students:
- Deserve a unique and quality education
- Must have the opportunity to become actively involved in their education
- Learn best in a safe and inviting environment
- Should be assessed and instructed by various means
- Have the potential for improved achievement
- Have special talents and gifts to offer the community
- Learn best when they have positive self-concepts
- Can flourish in a small school setting where they are known and appreciated

# MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Catherine Jensen, New West Jordan Middle School, Jordan District,
Visiting Team Chairperson

Linda Covington, Central High School, Granite District

Blaine Greenhalgh, Alpine Life and Learning Center, Alpine District

**VISITING TEAM REPORT**

**CREEKSIDE HIGH SCHOOL**

**CHAPTER 1:  SCHOOL PROFILE**

Creekside High School is the alternative high school in the Murray School District.  The school currently serves approximately 100 students, who come to the school for a number of reasons.  Some are referred from Murray High School for attendance or behavior issues.  Some are referred from the two district junior high schools for problems at the regular school.  Still others choose to come to Creekside because of the smaller classes, recognition of individuality, and the need to be educated in a nontraditional setting.

The school is working to overcome a reputation as a "dumping ground" for unsuccessful students.  In the past, students have been referred by the other schools for non-attendance and/or behavior problems.  When those same problems occurred at Creekside, the students were referred on to the night program.  The night program was not highly structured and lost track of a number of students.  The school is working to move from this to a model where students who, for a number of reasons, may not be successful in the traditional setting have equal educational opportunities.

a)      *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

Analysis of the school profile revealed these significant findings:
- Insufficient data exists to adequately inform school practices.
- Attendance data indicates a very high rate of absenteeism.
- Scores on the UBSCT show an increase in student achievement.
- Failure rates are extremely high.
- Results from the school surveys indicate something of an incongruence of results from teachers and parents.

b)      *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Through the self-study process, the school has recognized the need for an effective data collection system.  Effort must be given to developing a system that can inform the practices and programs of the school.  Limited data is currently available that tracks the progress of students or informs the staff of individual student needs.  The staff is currently evaluating the success of the school based on program implementation rather than the effectiveness of the programs implemented.  The staff is commended for its recognition of the insufficiency of the current data.  Goal #2 in the action plan is to develop and implement an information management system to more effectively access, disaggregate, and analyze data.  Care should be

taken to ensure the quality as well as the quantity of the data collected.  Data should be collected that can inform instructional practice.


**Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- Investigate graduation and dropout rates.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of programs based on data.


## CHAPTER 2:  THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS


a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The school is commended for the collaborative effort of the self-study process on behalf of students.  All certificated staff members participated fully in the process.  Most departments consist of an individual teacher who reported for that department.  The seven areas of systemic evaluation of the focus groups were completed by the entire staff.  Parents were repeatedly invited to participate in the process.  The chair of the School Community Council was fully involved.  Because of the unique nature of the patrons, parent and student participation was minimal.

b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The school's self-study accurately reflects the school's current strengths and limitations.  The school was very willing not only to explore the things that are working very well in the school, but also to face and report those areas in need of improvement.  The school is commended for its willingness to "confront the brutal facts" in order to develop a plan for school improvement.


## CHAPTER 3:  INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS


Creekside High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Effective Communicator
   An effective communicator is a student who:

- Evaluates his/her audience to select and utilize appropriate methods and styles of communication.
- Demonstrates active listening
- Communicates with fluency, clarity, and purpose.
- Identifies and uses appropriate strategies to resolve conflict.

2.  Complex Thinker
    A complex thinker is a student who:
    - Selects and uses a variety of thinking skills and strategies.
    - Accesses, interprets, evaluates, organizes and manages information effectively.
    - Identifies several different solutions to a problem and chooses the best one for the situation.
    - Perseveres even when discouraged.

3.  Responsible Citizen
    A responsible citizen is a student who:
    - Recognizes himself/herself as part of a global community.
    - Understands the cause-and-effect relationship of his/her actions.
    - Sets realistic and achievable personal and career goals.

## Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a)  *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The Visiting Team commends the school for the collaborative process used to build a shared vision that defines a compelling purpose and direction. A consensus-building process is established that involves teacher and administrators in defining the school's beliefs, mission, and goals, but provides a limited role for other stakeholders, such as students, parents, and community members. The alternative school predictably proved to be a difficult setting in which to include other stakeholder groups. The entire certificated staff participated in the process, with facilitation from Life-long Learning Associates and district office personnel. The staff members acknowledged the unique needs of their students and worked to develop a mission statement that truly reflects hopes for those students. Parents were invited to participate throughout the process, with limited results. The few who did participate were pleased with the process and felt their voices were heard. They believe the staff is striving to act upon the mission and beliefs on behalf of their children. Students also had limited participation in the process, but were able to express the mission of the school in their own words. They know the staff cares about them and has hope for their future. The principal has worked to involve the community in the work of the school through the Exchange Club by working toward providing student internships.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to reach out to parents in order to develop a trust and better communication, and encourages the continued practice of having parents participating in the annual orientation. The team suggests that the school continue to explore other ways to enhance the teacher/student/parent partnership.

b)    *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

Creekside High School's belief statements are comprehensive and address key issues pertinent to effective decision making and policy development in the school. The school staff expressed its commitment to the mission and beliefs. There are many evidences of the school working toward practice of the mission and beliefs. However, limited training and resources have been available in order to make the transition from traditional teaching and learning to "nontraditional educational opportunities." The staff is willing and must be provided the opportunity to explore current best practices in relation to alternative student populations. The words "unique," "actively involved," and "various means" appear in the belief statements, yet observations by the Visiting Team indicate teaching strategies that would be seen in any traditional setting. The next step is to put into practice these deeply held beliefs through exploration and implementation of best practices.

c)    *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The mission and beliefs are aligned to support the school's desired results for student learning. The Visiting Team, through interviews, verified the commitment of the staff to the desired results for student learning in order to reach the goal of helping students have successful futures. Work has begun on implementing the DRSLs across the curriculum with a goal to continue that implementation.


**Curriculum Development:**

a)    *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The curriculum is based on clearly defined standards. State Core alignment is evident in most core subjects. Elective courses reflect clearly the interest and needs of alternative students. Life skills instruction was evident. The student group discussed this aspect at length and felt that the school was focused on helping students be successful in life beyond high school. Students indicated that the actions of the school's staff backed up the goals of the school in terms of life skills. Some adjustments to State Core Curriculum Standards have been made in order to

help students acquire deficit credit.  The staff acknowledges the need for curriculum adjustments in order to meet the needs of the alternative students.

The Visiting Team suggests, as a next step, continued professional development in such practices as curriculum mapping, essential questions, and backward design.  These practices help to refine the curriculum, suggest effective instructional strategies, and develop appropriate and varied assessment strategies.

b)    *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The plan for supporting the implementation of the curriculum is not fully developed.  Some efforts are made to align teaching practices, instructional support and resources, and the assessment of student learning with the DRSLs.  The school has recently focused on literacy to support the communication DRSL.  Students have been individually assessed to determine reading skills.  The school has adopted the Six Traits of Writing rubric in order to create common expectations and vocabulary across the curriculum.  Individualized accelerated and/or remediation units have been prepared by the staff this past summer.  These packets serve to help students make up deficit credit or move ahead toward early graduation.  Although the packets are much improved, the Visiting Team suggests that attention be given to critical skills needed by the students in order to address the State Core Curriculum, and that more effective instructional strategies be researched and implemented.  The Visiting Team encourages the staff members to continue their efforts to ensure each student's attainment of competency in skills, rather than merely in credit accumulation.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school explore the practices of cross-curricular instruction, the design of thematic units, and the use of technology to access the curriculum.  These practices would bring the rigor and relevance of the curriculum to alternative students who must see a connection between schooling and the real world.


**Quality Instructional Design:**

a)    *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The Visiting Team was able to visit every classroom and full-time teacher in the school.  Observations indicated that most teachers were using a very direct and traditional type of instructional practice.  Opportunities for students to be actively engaged in learning are limited.  The staff expressed a willingness to explore different instructional strategies, but felt they needed professional development in this area.  The staff members are committed to the school's mission statement and

DRSLs. They recognize they do not use varied instructional practices. The Visiting Team is confident that the staff members will move forward in increasing their expertise in varied practices and implementing them in the classroom.

b)      *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The school has implemented a number of instructional programs to ensure the needs of different learners are met. For example, remediation and acceleration classes are offered as an option during first period. Math and ALS tutors have been made available. Students who struggle with reading are encouraged to take an additional reading class. The school is committed to meeting the needs of those students who are struggling. Next steps would include implementation of varied teaching strategies in the regular classes, in addition to added classes. These varied strategies would further ensure the success of each student, rather than merely provide another opportunity for students to learn the material in the same ways as previously taught.

c)      *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The school staff provides 1$^{st}$ and 8$^{th}$ period remediation as well as peer tutoring, adult tutoring, and before- and after-school help. Some students are able to have dual enrollment with the traditional high school. Students are able to access special education and ESL services through this cooperation. The Visiting Team commends the staff members for these opportunities and suggests they continue to research varied strategies that may prevent the need for additional programs.


**Quality Assessment Systems:**

a)      *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The school staff has worked to incorporate a number of school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement. Most of these come from the state UPASS system and include CRTs, UBSCT, and other standardized testing. In addition to these, the school has implemented a school-wide reading and writing assessment. The results of the reading assessment are used to help students who are struggling receive more help with this critical skill. The Six Traits of Writing rubric is used across the curriculum in order to clearly articulate expectations for student achievement. Preliminary data indicates that these two assessments and the subsequent interventions are having a positive affect on performance on the standardized tests. The school is commended for this effort.

The school has an expressed goal to develop indicators of success, instructional strategies, and assessment tools in relation to the newly adopted DRSLs. The Visiting Team recommends that this be done strategically over the next few years, and continually evaluated for success of intended purpose.

b)     *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The Visiting Team is unable to determine the methods used to develop assessments of student learning for assessments other than the two previously mentioned. Assessments observed were almost all traditional paper-and-pencil assignments. Many students work on the completion of packets of tasks. The goal seems to be task completion rather than to show competency at a certain performance standard. The school staff is very willing to revisit its assessment practices for validity of purpose and setting of performance standards. The Visiting Team suggests that the school consider the following three guiding questions: (1) What is important for students to know? (2) How will we know when they know it? (3) How will we respond if they don't know it? Answers to these questions guide decisions on what is important to teach, assessment design, and alternative instructional methods.

c)     *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Evidence suggests that current assessments are used in a fair and equitable manner. Students feel they are treated fairly in the majority of the assessment practices. The Visiting Team suggests staff members work together to ensure comparable expectations for performance across the content areas. Inequity could be perceived to occur because of the lack of variety in instructional practices available to meet the needs of the individual and nontraditional learner. Students are satisfied that the expectations are the same for all, but are less convinced that "the same for all" is what is needed and equitable.


## Leadership for School Improvement:

a)     *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The Visiting Team commends the school leadership for promoting quality instruction. The principal, Mrs. Kranz, has established an academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are supported. She has led the school to focus on curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices, and established an environment where it is acceptable to "confront the brutal facts" and seek for ways to improve. Students feel valued and important. The accomplishments of staff and students are celebrated.

*b)*	*To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The decision-making process ensures consistency with the school's beliefs, mission and goals.  The school leadership is working to make decisions based on validated, research-based practices.  Plans are in place to collect the pertinent data that can inform the decision-making process.  The decision-making process is collaborative and provides opportunities for the meaningful involvement of the school's stakeholders.

*c)*	*To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The self-study that has recently been completed is the starting point for monitoring progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness.  The school monitors progress on UPASS data, but recognizes it has little other data to inform instructional practices.  Plans are in place develop an effective data collection and evaluation system.  The school is commended for its initial attempts at a comprehensive assessment system with the Six Traits of Writing and reading assessments.  The school is encouraged to take similar steps of reflection on their other assessment practices in order to ensure variety, validity, and fairness in assessment practices.

*d)*	*To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The school is commended for policies and operational procedures that are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission, and are designed to maximize opportunities for successful learning.  The school's goal is embodied in its actions to ensure the success of every student.

*e)*	*To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The allocation and use of resources (e.g., human resources, time as a resource for learning, physical resources, instructional resources, financial resources) are aligned with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts.  The principal has made systematic school improvement the focus of her work.

*f)*	*To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school is moving toward shared responsibility for student learning.  Parents are strongly encouraged to be more involved in their children's education.  Staff members and students are being encouraged to participate collaboratively in the reflection and decision-making process.  The leadership has developed a culture of empowerment to make a difference, and the commitment to do so.

## Community Building:

*a)*    *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team commends the staff for its efforts in community building.  Positive and productive working relationships are established among students, teachers, support staff, and administrators.  The school creates and sustains a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging.  The staff has worked collaboratively to develop a shared mission, beliefs, and goals.

Positive and effective relationships are in place to support the learning community of the school.  Students feel safe and valued.  Students have staff members in whom they can confide.  Social services from professional social workers are available.

Teachers continually confer together about student and school needs.  Teachers care about the students; students feel this caring from most of the staff.  The entire faculty is supported as a single team in its efforts to collaborate on school goals and improvement efforts.

Ongoing meetings and teaming by the school and Community Council members provide information about specific student needs and the opportunity for parents to have a voice in the school.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to invite and motivate parents to be involved and seek support from district administration in this effort.  Perhaps a letter from the superintendent may help parents become more involved.

*b)*    *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

Honest and persistent effort is being made to involve parents. Evolving communication links have been implemented with the feeder schools. The school actively participates with Boys and Girls Clubs to support instruction and to provide recreation opportunities.  The school is working to enhance its relationship with the traditional high school.  Efforts are being made by the principal to contact individual parents for "positive reports" in addition to the traditional "problem" reports.

Since there has been limited parental involvement, as a next step the school may work toward an outreach effort. The school is encouraged to explore additional options for expanding parental involvement.

b)      *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The school is making some efforts to reach out to most parents and families and engage them as partners in the learning process. Creekside High has extended the school community through collaboration with the business community (including the Exchange Club) and a partnership with the Boys and Girls club. Dual enrollment has been initiated with the traditional high school to meet the educational needs of the individual students. The school is commended for these efforts.


## Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a)      *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The current reality is that the school supports professional development in training for computer use and the Six Traits of Writing. The staff is very willing be trained in a greater variety of instructional styles. This is one of the common elements throughout the departmental and focus group data. The principal has supported individual teachers in their efforts to seek content area professional development.

The Visiting Team suggests that the faculty and administration members be provided with time and resources to visit other alternative school settings. There should be a systematic research effort to learn and implement best practices gleaned from all educational areas (ESL, special ed., gifted/talented, and traditional). The Visiting Team further suggests that the staff, as a group, research current best practices through readings, visiting experts, and conference attendance.

b)      *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The implementation of reading strategies across the curriculum is ongoing. This effort has produced measurable improvement in student reading scores, as measured by several assessment tools. The data is still preliminary, but shows movement in the right direction. Math instruction has been implemented, and some improvement has been documented. The school is commended for its initial efforts to collect data and provide instruction to improve student achievement. The Visiting Team suggests that the school expand this effort to other areas of the curriculum. The

culture for productive change and continuous improvement has been established. The school seems renewed by its new commitment to continuous improvement, is beginning to understand the change process, and is supportive of individuals and groups responsible for implementing school improvement initiatives.

## CHAPTER 4:  NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

### Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met.  Creekside High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

### Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is **partially** met.  Creekside High has a counselor who has a degree in counseling but is not a licensed educator.  The school supports its guidance program through the school social worker and by accessing the guidance program at Murray High School.

### Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met.  The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs, and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

### Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is **not** met.  Students do not demonstrate the ability to recognize and identify their information needs.  There is nothing in place to help students develop these informational skills.  The school does not have the services of certified library media personnel, although there are qualified people in the district.

### Standard V – Records

This standard is met.   Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents.  Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

**Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)**

This standard is met.  The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

**Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel**

This standard is partially met.  Three staff members are deficient in preparation.

**Standard VIII – Administration**

This standard is met.  The administration of Creekside High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

**Standard IX – Teacher Load**

This standard is met.  The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

**Standard X – Activities**

This standard is met.  The staff supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and experiences for learning to take place.

**Standard XI – Business Practices**

This standard is met.  The school is financially responsible.  Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds.  The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

# CHAPTER 5:  SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a)    *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan addresses the need for a systematic data collection system.  It also provides for the implementation of teaching strategies and assessment of the DRSLs.  A third goal addresses student social and emotional health.  These are all areas that need follow-up.  The Visiting Team commends the school for setting

these admirable and necessary goals.  However, there is no specific goal in the action plan to address student achievement.   One of the action steps addresses student achievement in a very general way.  The purpose of the collaborative self-study is to discover ways in which student achievement can be positively affected.  The Visiting Team suggests a review of the work of such experts as DuFour and Schmoker in order to set SMART goals on increasing student achievement through evaluation of instructional practices and implementation of best practices.  These goals should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**esults-oriented, and **T**imebound.  Increased student achievement should be the driving force for all decisions made at the school.  This should be an explicit goal that can be tracked and reported in real numbers.

b)    *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The school staff seems sufficiently committed to the action plan.  As with all school staffs, there appears to be a small percentage who are resistant or who question the value of the process.  The Visiting Team is satisfied that a sufficient percentage of the staff has developed a commitment to the accreditation process and the action plan to ensure the implementation of the plan.

c)    *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appears to be quite sound.  The Visiting Team again suggests that the school review the plan to ensure the goals are SMART goals.  The evaluation of success in achieving the goals should be measurable in terms of data, not just completion or program implementation.  The Visiting Team further suggests that specific assignments be made on reporting to individual faculty members to avoid the perception that "someone else is taking care of that."

## CHAPTER 6:  MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

### Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the staff for its commitment to the self-study process.  The staff members show a great willingness to accurately describe the current reality in an effort to list the steps that must be taken to reach their vision for students.

- The Visiting Team commends the staff for its dedication to providing a positive school climate for the school's alternative students. Students at Creekside High know the adults at the school care about them. They understand the vision the adults have for their futures. They acknowledge the hope the staff has for the individual student. They feel safe and have developed positive relationships with staff members. They know the members of the staff and trust them to help them with various problems.

- The Visiting Team commends the principal, Mrs. Jennifer Kranz, for her leadership. She has done an exemplary job of leading the staff through the self-study process on behalf of increased student achievement. She makes decisions on the allocation of all resources based on the mission, beliefs, and goals of school, which have been determined through a collaborative process.


## Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Creekside High School formalize a data collection system that can inform instructional practices. It is recommended that particular attention be paid to the action goal the school has developed on data collection. Data collection must be able to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, and to be used as the reason to change practices for the better. Data collection must be focused on the purpose of increasing student achievement.

- The Visiting Team suggests that Creekside High broaden its repertoire of instructional practices through study and implementation of current research-based best practices. Alternative students would benefit from project-based, experiential, and relevant learning activities helping them make connections with their real world.

- The Visiting Team recommends that Creekside High participate in professional development activities in order to broaden its understanding of its alternative students. It is recommend that the school seek to develop coalitions with other similar schools in order to share successful strategies.

- The Visiting Team recommends that Creekside High School work to implement a variety of assessment tools. Currently, the school relies on the traditional paper-and-pencil assessments through assignments, tests, and packets.